A Pooled Analysis of the CANDELA, PHOTON, and PULSAR Trials Through 96 Weeks: Comparably Low Intraocular Inflammation-related Events With Aflibercept 8 mg and 2 mg

Justus G. Garweg,¹ Diana V. Do,² Jean-Francois Korobelnik,^{3,4} Lloyd Clark,⁵ Sobha Sivaprasad,⁶ Sergio Leal,⁷ Alyson J. Berliner,⁸ Karen W. Chu,⁸ Andreas Stahl,⁹ John Wells,⁵ Claudia Tueckmantel,¹⁰ Ajla Dupljak,⁸ Maggie Hymowitz,⁸ Xin Zhang,⁷ Peter Morgan-Warren,⁷ April McCullough,⁸ Anna Portnoy,⁸ Ursula M. Schmidt-Ott,¹¹ on behalf of the CANDELA, PHOTON, and PULSAR study investigators

¹Swiss Eye Institute and Berner Augenklinik, Bern, Switzerland; ²Byers Eye Institute, Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto, CA, USA;
³CHU Bordeaux, Service d'Ophtalmologie, Bordeaux, France; ⁴University of Bordeaux, INSERM, Bordeaux Population Health, Bordeaux, France;
⁵Palmetto Retina Center, Prisma Health Medical Group/USC School of Medicine, Columbia, SC, USA; ⁶NIHR Moorfields Biomedical Research Centre, Moorsfields Eye Hospital, London, UK; ⁷Bayer Consumer Care AG, Basel, Switzerland;
⁸Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc., Tarrytown, NY, USA; ⁹Department of Ophthalmology, University Medicine Greifswald, Greifswald, Germany; ¹⁰Bayer AG, Wuppertal, Cermany; ¹¹Bayer AG, Berlin, Germany

Presented at the Retina World Congress, Fort Lauderdale, FL, USA, May 8–11, 2025

Disclosures

- Justus G. Garweg has served as a consultant/speaker for AbbVie, Bayer, Novartis, and Roche; and has received research funding from Bayer, Novartis, and Roche
 - DD is a consultant for Boehringer Ingelheim, Genentech, Kodiak Sciences, Kriya, and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; has received research funding from Boehringer Ingelheim, Genentech, Kriya, and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; and has stock options from Kodiak Sciences. JFK is a consultant for AbbVie, Apellis, Bayer, Carl Zeiss Meditec AG, Eyepoint Pharma, Ocular Therapeutix, Ocuphire, Opthea, Roche, and Théa Pharmaceuticals; and serves on the data safety monitoring/advisory board for Alexion, Novo Nordisk, and Opthea. WLC is a consultant for Genentech and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals; has received research support from Genentech; is a speaker for Bayer, Genentech, and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals; and has received travel support from Bayer, Genentech, and Regeneron. SS receives funding/fees from Allergan, Apellis, Bayer, Biogen, Boehringer Ingelheim, EyeBiotech, Novartis, Optos, and Roche. SL, XZ, and PMW are employees of Bayer Consumer Care AG. AJB, KC, AD, MH, AM, and AP are employees of Regeneron. AS is a consultant for Allergan, Apellis, Bayer, Novartis, and Roche. JW is a consultant for 4DMT, Genentech/Roche, Neurotech, and Ocular Therapeutix; and has received research support from 4DMT, Adverum, Astellas, Aviceda, Bayer, Eyebiotech, Eyepoint, Genentech, Iveric, Kalaris, Kodiak, Lowy MRI, Neurotech, Ocular Therapeutix, Oculis, Opthea, Outlook Therapeutics, Regeneron, and Roche. CT and USO are employees of Bayer AG
- The CANDELA and PHOTON studies were sponsored by Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Tarrytown, NY), and the PULSAR study was funded by Bayer AG (Leverkusen, Germany). The sponsor participated in the design and conduct of the studies, analysis of the data, and preparation of this presentation
- Study disclosures: These studies include research conducted on human patients; Institutional Review Board approval was obtained prior to study initiation
- The pooled safety analysis of intravitreal aflibercept 8 mg from CANDELA, PHOTON, and PULSAR was previously presented at the ARVO Annual Meeting, May 4–8, 2025, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
- Medical writing support, under the directions of the authors, was provided by ApotheCom and funded by Bayer Consumer Care AG, Basel, Switzerland, in accordance with Good Publication Practice (GPP) guidelines (*Ann Intern Med* 2022;175:1298–1304)

Background and Methods

- The purpose of the current analysis was to evaluate IOI-related events with aflibercept 8 mg and 2 mg through to 96 weeks
- Data from 3 multicenter, randomized clinical trials comparing the efficacy and safety of aflibercept 8 mg versus aflibercept 2 mg were pooled:
 - Phase 2 CANDELA trial in treatment-naïve patients with nAMD
 - Phase 3 PULSAR trial in treatment-naïve patients with nAMD
 - Phase 2/3 PHOTON trial in treatment-naïve and previously treated patients with DME
- Data were pooled through Week 44 of the CANDELA trial and through Week 96 of the PULSAR and PHOTON trials
 - Overall, safety data for 1773 patients were evaluated

	Aflibercept 2 mg pooled	8q12	8q16	Aflibercept 8 mg pooled ^a
CANDELA, n	53	53	0	53
PULSAR, n	336	335	338	673
PHOTON, n	167	328	163	491
Total, n	556	716	501	1217

Safety analysis set. ^aThree initial monthly injections followed by injections at Weeks 20 and 32. 8q12, aflibercept 8 mg every 12 weeks; 8q16, aflibercept 8 mg every 16 weeks; DME, diabetic macular edema; IOI, intraocular inflammation; nAMD, neovascular age-related macular degeneration.

Baseline Demographics and Aflibercept Exposure in the Pooled Safety Analysis

	Aflibercept 2 mg pooled (n=556)	Aflibercept 8 mg pooled ^a (n=1217)
Baseline demographics		
Female, n (%)	299 (53.8)	574 (47.2)
Age group, n (%) <65 years ≥65–<75 years ≥75 years White, n (%) Hispanic or Latino, n (%)	141 (25.4) 196 (35.3) 219 (39.4) 412 (74.1) 47 (8.5)	349 (28.7) 441 (36.2) 427 (35.1) 927 (76.2) 106 (8.7)
Aflibercept exposure		
Total number of injections	6464	10,067
Number of injections, mean (SD)	11.6 (3.1)	8.3 (2.1)
Treatment duration, mean (SD), weeks	84.1 (24.5)	86.8 (22.6)

IOI-related Events in the Study Eye

	Aflibercept 2 mg pooled (n=556)	Aflibercept 8 mg pooled (n=1217)
Patients with ≥1 IOI-related event, n (%)	9 (1.6)	16 (1.3)
Iridocyclitis	2 (0.4)	4 (0.3)
Iritis	0	3 (0.2)
Anterior chamber cell	1 (0.2)	2 (0.2)
Uveitis	2 (0.4)	2 (0.2)
Vitreal cells	2 (0.4)	2 (0.2)
Vitritis	0	2 (0.2)
Chorioretinitis	0	1 (<0.1)
Endophthalmitis	2 (0.4)	0
Eye inflammation	1 (0.2)	0
Hypopyon	1 (0.2)	0
Severity of IOI-related events, n (%)		
Mild	7 (1.3)	12 (1.0)
Moderate	1 (0.2)	4 (0.3)
Severe	1 (0.2)	0

Of the patients who developed IOI with aflibercept 2 mg or 8 mg, 78% and 69% had recovered or were recovering at the time of analysis, respectively

Conclusions

Incidence of IOI-related events

- Incidence of IOI-related events was low and similar between aflibercept 8 mg and 2 mg
- No cases of endophthalmitis were reported with aflibercept 8 mg, 2 cases of endophthalmitis were reported with aflibercept 2 mg

Severity of IOI-related events

- Most IOI-related events were mild in severity for both aflibercept 8 mg and 2 mg, with 1 case of severe IOI reported with aflibercept 2 mg
- Most of the patients receiving aflibercept 8 mg and 2 mg, who developed IOI-related events fully recovered or were recovering at the time of analysis

Safety profile

Overall, aflibercept 8 mg demonstrated comparable safety to aflibercept
2 mg for up to 96 weeks across the CANDELA, PULSAR, and PHOTON trials